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CLAIMS:

What is claimed is:

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- 1 1. A method in a data processing system for creating
2 rules to process electronic messages:
3 detecting user input moving an electronic message
4 into a folder;
5 comparing characteristics of the electronic message
6 with other electronic messages in the folder to form a
7 comparison; and
8 generating a rule to process electronic messages
9 based on the comparison.
 - 1 2. The method of claim 1 further comprising:
2 processing received messages using the rule.
 - 1 3. The method of claim 2, wherein the processing step
2 is initiated in response to another user input approving
3 use of the rule.
 - 1 4. The method of claim 1, wherein the criteria includes
2 priority-based common fields and common content.
 - 1 5. The method of claim 1, wherein the folder is a trash
2 folder.
 - 1 6. The method of claim 1, wherein the detecting step,
2 the comparing step, and the generating step are initiated
3 in response to a selected user input.

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1 7. The method of claim 1, wherein the criteria includes
2 at least one of a sender address, a selected word in a
3 subject line body of the electronic message, a select
4 word in a body of the electronic message, and an
5 attribute of the time/date field of the electronic
6 message.

1 8. The method of claim 1, wherein the other electronic
2 messages in the folder are electronic messages selected
3 through user input.

1 9. The method of claim 1 further comprising:
2 generating the rule to process electronic messages
3 based on characteristics of the electronic message if
4 other electronic messages in the folder are absent.

1 10. The method of claim 1 further comprising:
2 generating the rule to process electronic messages
3 based on characteristics of the electronic message if
4 other electronic messages in the folder are unselected by
5 user input.

1 11. The method of claim 10 further comprising:
2 presenting the rule for review; and
3 using the rule to process electronic messages if
4 user input accepting the rule is received.

1 12. The method of claim 11 further comprising:
2 presenting a modification of the rule if user input
3 accepting the rule is absent.

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1 13. A method in a data processing system for processing
2 electronic messages, the method comprising the data
3 processing system implemented steps of:

4 identifying an action on an electronic message;
5 identifying characteristics of the electronic
6 message using a criteria to form a comparison; and
7 generating a rule to process electronic messages
8 including the action and a selected characteristic
9 identified in the comparison.

1 14. The method of claim 13, wherein the action is a
2 deletion of the electronic message.

1 15. The method of claim 13 further comprising:
2 responsive to the action being performed on other
3 electronic messages comparing characteristics of the
4 electronic message the other electronic messages.

1 16. The method of claim 13, wherein the action is a
2 movement of the electronic message into a folder
3 containing other electronic messages and wherein the step
4 of identifying characteristics comprises:
5 comparing the electronic message to other electronic
6 messages using the criteria to form the comparison.

1 17. A data processing system comprising:
2 a bus system;
3 a communications unit connected to the bus system;

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4 a memory connected to the bus system, wherein the
5 memory includes a set of instructions; and
6 a processing unit connected to the bus system,
7 wherein the processing unit executes the set of
8 instructions to identify an action on an electronic
9 message, identify characteristics of the electronic
10 message using a criteria to form a comparison, and
11 generate a rule to process electronic messages including
12 the action and a selected characteristic identified in
13 the comparison.

1 18. The data processing system of claim 17, wherein the
2 bus system is a single bus.

1 19. The data processing system of claim 17, wherein the
2 bus system includes a primary bus and a secondary bus.

1 20. The data processing system of claim 17, wherein the
2 processing unit includes a plurality of processors.

1 21. The data processing system of claim 17, wherein the
2 communications unit is one of a modem and Ethernet
3 adapter.

1 22. A data processing system in a data processing system
2 for creating rules to process electronic messages:
3 detecting means for detecting user input moving an
4 electronic message into a folder;

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5 comparing means for comparing characteristics of the
6 electronic message with other electronic messages in the
7 folder to form a comparison; and
8 generating means for generating a rule to process
9 electronic messages based on the comparison.

1 23. The data processing system of claim 22 further
2 comprising:

3 processing means for processing received messages
4 using the rule.

1 24. The data processing system of claim 22, wherein the
2 routing means is activated in response to another user
3 input approving use of the rule.

1 25. The data processing system of claim 21, wherein the
2 criteria includes priority-based common fields and common
3 content.

1 26. The data processing system of claim 21, wherein the
2 folder is a trash folder.

1 27. The data processing system of claim 21, wherein the
2 detecting means, the comparing means, and the generating
3 means are activated in response to a selected user input.

1 28. The data processing system of claim 21, wherein the
2 criteria includes at least one of a sender address, a
3 selected word in a subject line body of the electronic
4 message, a select word in a body of the electronic

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5 message, and an attribute of the time/date field of the
6 electronic message.

1 29. The data processing system of claim 21, wherein the
2 other electronic messages in the folder are electronic
3 messages selected through user input.

1 30. The data processing system of claim 21 further
2 comprising:
3 generating means for generating the rule to process
4 electronic messages based on characteristics of the
5 electronic message if other electronic messages in the
6 folder are absent.

1 31. The data processing system of claim 21 further
2 comprising:
3 generating means for generating the rule to process
4 electronic messages based on characteristics of the
5 electronic message if other electronic messages in the
6 folder are unselected by user input.

1 32. The data processing system of claim 31 further
2 comprising:
3 presenting means for presenting the rule for review;
4 and
5 using means for using the rule to process electronic
6 messages if user input accepting the rule is received.

1 33. The data processing system of claim 32 further
2 comprising:

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3 presenting means for presenting a modification of
4 the rule if user input accepting the rule is absent.

1 34. A data processing system for processing electronic
2 messages, the data processing system comprising the data
3 processing system implemented steps of:

4 first identifying means for identifying an action on
5 an electronic message;

6 second identifying means for identifying
7 characteristics of the electronic message using a
8 criteria to form a comparison; and

9 generating means for generating a rule to process
10 electronic messages including the action and a selected
11 characteristic identified in the comparison.

1 35. The data processing system of claim 34, wherein the
2 action is a deletion of the electronic message.

1 36. The data processing system of claim 34 further
2 comprising:

3 responsive means for responsive to the action being
4 performed on other electronic messages comparing
5 characteristics of the electronic message the other
6 electronic messages.

1 37. The data processing system of claim 34, wherein the
2 action is a movement of the electronic message into a
3 folder containing other electronic messages and wherein
4 the second identifying means comprises:

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5 comparing means for comparing the electronic message
6 to other electronic messages using the criteria to form
7 the comparison.

1 38. A computer program product in a computer readable
2 medium for use in a data processing system for creating
3 rules to process electronic messages:

4 first instructions for detecting user input moving
5 an electronic message into a folder;

6 second instructions for comparing characteristics of
7 the electronic message with other electronic messages in
8 the folder to form a comparison; and

9 third instructions for generating a rule to process
10 electronic messages based on the comparison.

1 39. A computer program product in a data processing
2 system for processing electronic messages, the computer
3 program product comprising the data processing system
4 implemented steps of:

5 first instructions for identifying an action on an
6 electronic message;

7 second instructions for identifying characteristics
8 of the electronic message using a criteria to form a
9 comparison; and

10 third instructions for generating a rule to process
11 electronic messages including the action and a selected
12 characteristic identified in the comparison.

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